

Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Russell Wickersham
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson and
Miss Lilly Armida Feretti - January 27, 1978

TAP 1 - SIDE 1 & 2

DODSON: I wonder Mr. and Mrs. Wickersham if you would give your names and tell us how long you've lived in the valley here in Burbank?

MR. WICKER: Do you want us to take turns or...

DODSON: Well, I suppose one of you tell how long you've been here and then the other.

MR. WICKER: She's a native of California...

DODSON: Oh, a Native Daughter.

MRS. WICKER: I've been here 84 years.

DODSON: 84?

MRS. WICKER: I was born in Pasadena ?

MR. WICKER: I was born in ? Iowa. My sister and I attended college there and we finished her courses and taught and I left school after the second year and

went into the jewelry business. So I came to California in 1909 at 9:00 in the morning.

DODSON: You are really precise on when you got here.

MR. WICKER: Everything turned up "9"... 9:00 in the morning, 1909 and there was something else there. I don't know what it is now.

DODSON: Now Mr. Wickersham, you're going to tell us how you first came into Burbank.

MR. WICKER: I came in on the train, of course. And there was a fellow waiting for me by the name of Hanford Freeman, who I'd met as a friend in Colorado. And he said, "Come on out to California. I've got a job for you as soon as you come out here." And he was waiting for me at the train at 9:00 in the morning at 1909. And he said, "Come on, get off, get off." And I said, "I can't get off. I've got to go to Los Angeles and pick up my trunk and then come out here." So kept angry and ? while I came out here and went to Los Angeles and picked up my trunk and come out on that little diesel train at one car. A diesel motor engine and one car. I came out an hour later and there he was waiting for me.

DODSON: Now that was before the red cars had been built to Burbank was it?

MR. WICKER: That was about five, six, seven, eight years before.

MRS. WICKER: No, not nine.

MR. WICKER: Two years before they were running.

DODSON: Were they running these little one car trains then back and forth between Burbank and Los Angeles on the main line of the Southern Pacific? I see.

MR. WICKER: The main line is a double track to Burbank. And one goes up the first line and one goes up the valley and the station in Burbank stationed at that time was a boxcar. And it was just below the track there was a ? where the Bomb Steel Company is now and where ? put his trolley in there. That was all just swamp and toolies in there where the ? bullies and cook their meals and ? the officers had to watch for them all the time. Billy Weaver was the constable at the time. He had a team of bay horses and a high heel rubber tie buggy that went all over the country here. And he was watching out for all of them.

DODSON: So the thing that caused you to come to Burbank was that this friend you met in Colorado had offered you a job here?

MR. WICKER: He was in Colorado at the time. And yes, that's right. And Mrs. Pope moved from Colorado where we were to Burbank, California and I came out here. And he had a job for me all right. What was it? It was working on a ranch.

DODSON: Can you tell us a little about that ranch. What did they produce?

MR. WICKER: Well, it was...? Charlie and Warren Forbes met at the Radcliff Ranch. That's what it was. It was down here by southern Burbank. Just right above the edge of Glendale where Grandview Avenue comes down there. You could see that we were out working out in the fields every day and the lark would come through at 6:00 in the evening...you could set your watch by it. And back in the morning at 9:00. And they had...

DODSON: Perhaps I should say for the record, for those who don't know what the "lark" is...that that was the Southern Pacific's ? train.

MR. WICKER: That's right. Went to San Francisco and back. It went right up there in the evening and back in the morning. And it was just as regular as your watch runs. Things that they grew out there weren't so much hey at this time, there was sweet potatoes and things like that but the ranch that they rented was the home ranch up at Van Nuys, a big home ranch of several hundred acres up there, which is now the center of Van Nuys. It was the next farm and farm delis all over the place and we forged and entered the ground and grew barley on it. And we fellows went up there...and my job was with the rest of them was baling hey.

DODSON: Let's see...now that home ranch was one of the six Lankershim ranches, wasn't it?

MR. WICKER: Right. Yes, sir. And it was a good ranch too. Okay, what will I tell you now?

DODSON: Well, was that a seasonal job then or did you have steady employment?

MR. WICKER: Just all farming...all summer long. I worked for the ? one summer there. And then I went to work for Mr. L.C. Brand.

DODSON: After Brand Blvd. is named for?

MR. WICKER: That's right. He lived...you know where his lake is up there in the mountains?

DODSON: No, I don't.

MR. WICKER: A big big place that he later donated to the City of Glendale for a library.

DODSON: I know there is a library up in the hills but I've never been there.

MRS. WICKER: They called it Brand's Castle.

MR. WICKER: That was Mr. Brand's...Brand's Castle. And I have a picture of it of course. The gateway is called Muro Duro, whatever that means...it must be Spanish.

DODSON: Lilly...Lilly knows Spanish pretty well. She's from Ecuador.

MR. WICKER: What does it mean?

LILLY: It's something that probably means mountain or ? city. ?

DODSON: What sort of wages were paid you at that time?

MR. WICKER: Shall I tell you?

DODSON: That'd be very interesting.

MR. WICKER: He gave us ?\$3.00 a month. A whole lump sum of \$60.00 a month and Mr. Brand was going around to his other chamois in a bag about so long and he'd reach down in it and hand us out 3 \$20.00 gold pieces. He paid us in gold...he paid everybody in gold.

DODSON: That's rather interesting in itself. That he paid in that sort of way.

LILLY: Did he have other businesses other than farming?

MR. WICKER: Just take care of his farming. Other than the ranch and farm businesses, he had the 12 acres of oranges and 5 acres of lemons and several fruit trees up near the project on top it....

DODSON: I was going to ask Lilly...did you mean how did that compare with the wages for other jobs?

LILLY: Yes.

DODSON: That's what she had in mind.

MR. WICKER: Oh well, that was very much the wages were just like that all over. It didn't matter whether you mixing concrete for somebody or whether you burying hey or whatever it was. Wages were just about exactly the same all over for everybody.

DODSON: Now of course the price level was lower too for the things that you bought. How much would a pair of shoes had cost would you say...could you say off hand.

MR. WICKER: Well, a pair of shoes would cost maybe \$3.00. Probably ain't a lot...from \$3 to \$5. Depending on the type and whether you wanted work shoes or dress shoes. If you had a nice pair of dress shoes it would cost you probably \$5.00.

DODSON: So it would have taken you a little more than your day's work to buy a pair of shoes.

MR. WICKER: Yeah.

DODSON: That's one way to try to get the levels as compared to the present time. How did you have to work to buy a particular thing then and how long

would you have to work now to buy those same articles. So you would have to work a little more than one day then now, maybe almost two days or more to work to buy a pair of shoes.

MR. WICKER: I never thought about it that way.

MRS. WICKER: Why don't you tell them a little bit more about ?

MR. WICKER: Well Mr. Brand was a millionaire of course and I understand that his father was a liquor dealer and he had five sons and left them each a million dollars a piece. In fact I saw...he did his banking at Dan Thomas' Bank in Glendale. I saw a check signed by him for \$1,000,000. It's the only check I ever saw signed for a million dollars.

DODSON: Well, imagine having a checking account with a million dollars in it. I can't imagine that either.

MR. WICKER: That's what it was.

MRS. WICKER: But he controlled a great deal of Glendale.

MR. WICKER: Mr. Brand had the big reservoir at the upper side of his place there where it contained a lot of

water. He had a one inch pipeline running up the canyon about a mile. He owned all that canyon up there. He got maybe a little spring up there and that water usually made all the water necessary to water the 12 acres of oranges. Because ran all...unless it was an especially dry year, that there was always enough water. And if he didn't have enough water in the reservoir, he had a pumping plant right down at the foot of Grandview Avenue that the pipeline laid up there so that he just telephoned down to Art Campbell, who was his engineer then, to turn on the valve and fill up the reservoir. They were the fellows up there that used the water.

DODSON: Did you by any chance ever meet Colonel J.B. Lankershim, the owner of the Holden Ranch when you worked up there?

MR. WICKER: No, no I didn't.

MRS. WICKER: You met Mr. Stall?? ?

MR. WICKER: Mr. Brand had his own airplane. Had the first airplane in the valley I think. He had a little airport...his house was set up here on the hill and right across the street was a little airport.

It was all naked ground at the time and he made a little airport there. And he was the only one that had an airplane then at the time. And that big cement...you never saw that place up there have you?

DODSON: No, I have not been up there.

MR. WICKER: Well, if you ever go up there you'll find a big cement wall along the side of the place which I helped to make and look at the trees...the oak trees planted all along there, I helped to plant those trees 65 years ago.

DODSON: Is that right.

MR. WICKER: Now you can see how they grow in 65 years.

DODSON: Well, the oak is a rather long life tree isn't it so in fact they last quite awhile. No, I'm curious to go up there and see some of those things. I've never seen Brand Castle at all. I just know of it but I've never...

MR. WICKER: Mr. Brand had a very nice black radium horse, a five gaited horse that he had to have exercise occasionally and I exercised him once. ?

DODSON: You cheated a little bit.

MR. WICKER: No, I was just exercising the horse.

DODSON: Might as well go someplace as to go no place.

MR. WICKER: And I tied up the horse down at the Willy Olsen's blacksmith's shop, which was right there just from all down hill...this was of course Angelina or just about half way right...? down Angelina and O.C. Lane had his bicycle shop there and I bought a bicycle of them and later I turned it in and bought a seven Indian motorcycle from him and I later turned that in and bought a Ford, a Model T Ford.

DODSON: You were ever the satisfied customer.

MR. WICKER: Not with inflation now. Yep. Let's see...then we get up...you keep coming back to a certain place in Burbank, right of course, riding a motorcycle down in here...there's a certain place in Burbank...there was always a place in Burbank to ride ? And I married this young lady in 1917.

DODSON: How did you get acquainted with her?

MR. WICKER: Sunday school.

DODSON: Sunday school performed more than one function then. It wasn't entirely religious.

MR. WICKER: One of the boys who was with me knew ? and he sat right ahead of us and ? use to own besides crude oil a lumber jack business and patted her the back and said, "I want you to meet some fellow."

DODSON: Now you see how times have changed. My associate Lilly goes to a discotheque to meet people.

MR. WICKER: Oh I carried the...I was a mail carrier during the war, World War I. I had Route No. 1 out of Burbank and went up there and clear over into Sun Valley and around...I had a 54 mile route. And I drove one horse around there at first and then I had a car. ? Grover had to go to war, he was drafted and let me drive his car. And I drove his car at times until he came back.

DODSON: How satisfactory was the car in those days? Did you get frequent breakdowns or was the mechanics of it pretty good the engine?

MR. WICKER: I never had a breakdown.

MRS. WICKER: Just flat tires.

MR. WICKER: Yeah, a few flat tires. But...

DODSON: I wondered how the efficiency of cars then compared with the efficiency now. But you didn't have troubles.

MR. WICKER: Even the Model T's didn't have trouble mechanically. No. I had tire trouble. I blew a tire about every time I went to Los Angeles. We had bought this two acres up at the top of the hill then and I started a poultry ranch. And I had ? poultry and ? trap nesting. Do you know what a trap nest is?

DODSON: No, I don't.

MR. WICKER: Well a trap nest is a nest about so wide in front and about so deep with a nest in it and it has a door in it, like this. And the hen goes in, it looks just like this, and the hen goes in and she goes in and ? door and she locks her in...the screen of course. And she stays there and she has to wait until someone lets her out. That's what we did and we had all our hens leg-banded with a number and we'd get the book and put the hen under

your arm and take her off the nest and would read her leg band areas and get the egg and mark the egg with a certain number on it...Number 92 was one of my egg hen that laid 302 eggs in one year.

DODSON: Is that right. Now the purpose of the trap nest then was to enable you to keep track of each hen on their leg.

MR. WICKER: The size of eggs they laid, the type of eggs they laid and whether they would be good for breeders and you'd naturally breed your high producing stock to high producing mothers too.

DODSON: Now this is very interesting to know because people will not know what a trap nest was and what the purpose of the whole thing was.

MRS. WICKER: ??

DODSON: No, were glad to get those because people may not know these things.

MR. WICKER: Well I guess we've told you before, there was ? about a ? street in Burbank. He raised ? and rattle snakes at the time that wasn't that house anywhere. I had bought the two acres of property

up here it had a house on it. Wilma and her sons where we was ? She had asthma and they told ? they would fix him up alright but I bought the place from them. And they were real nice to us too.

DODSON: Now you mentioned in your mail deliveries that covered about 54 miles and the horse and the wagon. How long would it take you to make that circuit to deliver the mail?

MR. WICKER: It would take a long time. It took a long time and then when I got the car it went easier you know and faster.

DODSON: Well, it would take practically all day then to make the circuit?

MR. WICKER: Oh yeah, because you had to do so much stopping. You had to stop at every box and lots of things. That's when you had to sign money orders, you had to sell stamps and everything.

DODSON: You sold them on the route.

MR. WICKER: Sure. That's part of your job.

DODSON: I see. So it was a lot more complicated then just delivering a letter? Where was the post office located at that time?

MRS. WICKER: Burbank block on the corner...?

MR. WICKER: That was it. ? the post office.

DODSON: Now what would that street intersection be?

MR. WICKER: Olive and San Fernando road.

DODSON: Olive and San Fernando Road. We like to put these details down so in the future they'll know just where these buildings were.

MR. WICKER: We went down and take a look at some of those buildings yesterday and ? All the time...we sold the ranch and so long. You know, hard times begin to come along. That was so that the eggs they produced wouldn't pay for the grain that we had to buy for them. So were just going in the hole all the time. So we decided to sell the place. Now I had to sell those beautiful hens that were laying those eggs, those 300 egg hens for \$.19 a pound. They were worth \$50 a piece. There wasn't anybody

to give you a dollar for them. So that's the way it was then.

DODSON: Well, you know that was a little bit about what I'd just heard this morning or read in the financial pages that although the price of the farmer's products were going up, what he was getting for them was remaining the same. It was just the middle man that was getting the ? big profits.

MR. WICKER: That's right. That's the way they were. At the time we decided to sell the poultry and everything and ? houses and I had a ? at the schools. I told them what I could do and so on and they told ? grade and here come the business men year round. ? I could do the crops for him and I said, "Yes, I could do them." And he said, "Can you get them all cleaned and hung on the wall by the 10th day of September." And I said, "Yes, if you let me work nine hours a day." And I did. I got them all cleaned and put them all along the walls. And then here we are and the first thing you know we got all kinds of sound projectors and equipment and various things like that and they went back to electric systems now. Electric box that's here...everything is now electric now. I mean he

had projectors of all kinds and he had about \$50 or \$60,000 worth of projectors and certain sound projectors and that and had lots of radiators at the time ?

DODSON: Oh you had trainings of clock makers?

MR. WICKER: I told you I was manufacturing jewelry and clocks. That's where I learned my craft for that. There I had 50 or 65 clocks at the time on my shelves of different kinds of shapes and sizes. And that's the reason I knew how to ? when I was an operator and it was very good that I did because we good house and it only lasted 31 years.

DODSON: Well, you must have given good service if they didn't say any reason to change in that length of time.

MR. WICKER: Well I did all my work and I was able to work for him and do a good job and I don't know why anybody wouldn't like it. I don't know what I can tell you...

DODSON: Now when you got that job at the schools and before the electric clocks were put in, did you have a winding job to do?

MR. WICKER: No, the custodians in the school had that job to do.

DODSON: So you didn't have to go around...

MR. WICKER: The clocks were all wound and then I put them on the wall and they were set and regulated.

MRS. WICKER: ? on the all and they all ?

DODSON: Is that right.

MR. WICKER: ? all different brands of clocks. But then he had...you know they got the electric box and it changed it...it was run by a master clock and all the clocks in one building ? master clock and ?

DODSON: Now where in this picture does your connection with the monorail come in?

MR. WICKER: Well, that's way back there. That was way back there before I worked for Forbes.

MRS. WICKER: It was 1910.

MR. WICKER: Yeah, it was 1910.

DODSON: Can you describe that monorail for us and tell just how you were involved with it?

MR. WICKER: Well, the main thing that I was involved with was the putting up of the constructional steel for the rail. That's the first job that I had was you know...I didn't work on the car itself. That was all done by somebody else other than ?

MRS. WICKER: You told them about ?

MR. WICKER: Yes, this was ?

DODSON: Can you explain how it was propelled?

MR. WICKER: Oh yes, by propellers. Just like your airplane cars.

DODSON: At what sort of speed did it travel?

MR. WICKER: It was just a short blast. It never get any speed on it.

DODSON: How long was the track?

MR. WICKER: Oh not...about 400 feet or something like that.

DODSON: So you would have to be careful then how fast you went.

MR. WICKER: Oh yeah. And that runs down across that gully there along Barnes...do you know where Barne Steel is now? And that was all gully and toolies all through there then and Fox's ? is up on the hill a little farther back, about a block back.

DODSON: Fox was the name of the builder?

MR. WICKER: Yeah.

DODSON: Well, did it seem to be an efficient method of propulsion at that time? Did it seem to be practical?

MR. WICKER: Well, he thought it was but the rest of the people didn't think so. They wouldn't buy it.

MRS. WICKER: ? along across Los Angeles schools and the ? monorail and folks ?

MR. WICKER: To his monorail. Well, it's too bad that they didn't get it going because maybe we would have been better today than ? there's not a lot of....we don't have any red cars. So that's ?

come out then. And suppose the red car be up, ran down Burbank Blvd. pick up the rails and ?

DODSON: I haven't found a single person that hasn't been sorry those red cars disappeared.

MR. WICKER: All they wanted was to sell gasoline.

DODSON: What sort of motor did the monorail have?

MR. WICKER: It was...oh, I can't tell you what they had then...? It was just a small one. It didn't take much of a motor to run that propeller you know.

DODSON: You've got enough pushing power, plane propeller then to move it. Was it about like the same sort of motors that you had in your automobile you would say or ?

MR. WICKER: Not, no it wasn't as strong as the automobile motor. The automobile motors are quite strong you know. But no...I would say that that motor was not over...a very strong motor.

DODSON: Is that right? And it could drive 60 people?

MR. WICKER: Well, you see on that rail it'd move easy.

DODSON: Yes, that's true it wouldn't be a drag....?

MR. WICKER: There wasn't any drag then and it didn't drag anywhere it was all on just wheels. But it had to rev up enough to get the ?

DODSON: Did it have any particular defects that you were cautious of that would seem at the time to have shown that it wasn't going to be practical?

MR. WICKER: No. So if they were going to make a monorail to Los Angeles, they ought to make a ?

DODSON: Yeah, well that would be taken care of. Of the reverse on it.

MR. WICKER: Yeah, it didn't have a reverse on it. ?

DODSON: As I understand that one of the problems of monorails at present is that they have found no way to intersect the rails, that is for the cars to move across one rail at right end it's the other one.

MR. WICKER: Oh.

DODSON: That haven't solved that particular problem yet. So it would make it impossible to have connecting lines, so to speak, like you have in rails for railroads. I think I'm right about that.

MR. WICKER: I don't know. I never heard that.

DODSON: But then so far as you can see, it had no great defects that would have condemned it at the time as a form of transportation that could have been as practical as the red cars.

MR. WICKER: No, if they put a larger motor on it and I think as far as that concerned it would have worked.

DODSON: You just want to think about it now, why it didn't catch on with the people at the time.

MR. WICKER: Well, that was a long time ago. ? way ahead of it's time. ? ?

DODSON: That's alright because I haven't any recordings about this. You were the man that we...?

MRS. WICKER: I think it was quite common knowledge that he was a difficult person to listen to ? The city found

that. ? working hard to enter Burbank to Los Angeles because ? but he was a tough man.

MR. WICKER: He was ahead of his time.

MRS. WICKER: I think the major thing was ? controversy ? ?

MR. WICKER: And then do you want know the rest of my history?

DODSON: Yes, go right ahead.

MR. WICKER: Well anyway...we had our two acres there. We had two boys. I had one boy right at the end of the war in 1918. We had another boy the next year and we had a girl 10 years old. We built a house on Cypress Avenue when we first went up there. Cypress Avenue was the target of ? set up. You couldn't get up there with anything but a horse. But...we...?

DODSON: Well, now that's up to you. As far as we're concerned, we're willing to hear anything that you'd care to tell.

MR. WICKER: We lived there from 1915, we bought a 1/2 acre out in Sun Valley. We sold our place on 6080 Cypress Avenue. ? I think we were about to...the lot that

we want to sell...at the time when the lots went up real high, we could have gotten \$2,500 a lot. Where the extra lot that you got there.

DODSON: Was that went the water came in that suddenly boosted the value of the property?

MR. WICKER: I guess it was. And all the bankers and everybody went, "Don't sell it...don't sell now. You can get a lot more than that for them." I got a lot more alright. I got \$400 a lot. I was darn glad to get \$400 a lot instead of \$2,500 a lot that I could have gotten before. You see, that was the bankers advised me not to sell them. Well, then we made a life out there and lived there for 20 years, sold our place in 1973 and came back to Burbank to where we are.

DODSON: Now you said one thing that interested me about the Depression itself. How did that affect you?

MR. WICKER: Well, I was working for the school at the time for different schools. They took 10% of our salaries to ? hard up and so on.

MRS. WICKER: ??

MR. WICKER: Well, that's part of it. That is depression how it feels.

DODSON: You did have a steady job throughout the period yourself?

MR. WICKER: Yes.

MRS. WICKER: But there was a time when we were criticized for ? having ? people working ?

DODSON: Yes. But you both did worry to ? yourself.

MRS. WICKER: I had ? as a teacher. He was working in the Business Department and didn't have ? ?

MR. WICKER: But the thing that they cried about is two people in one family having jobs. You see that was the thing that...?

MRS. WICKER: ? but the big thing was ?

MR. WICKER: No, I think that was about ? names as far as we know.

DODSON: Well, Mrs. Wickersham, would you like to tell us about your recollections about it.

MRS. WICKER: Well, I told you about myself. ? and how we moved to Burbank in December of 1911 and we stayed at that old Santa Rosa Hotel. It was quite an experience. I wasn't a very happy girl when we moved and at that time was a big cupboard? called House of a Thousand Candles. ? and it reminded me very much of that, that was a real big house about gables and turrets and ? and dark halls and a great big dining room. I'll show you some pictures that I have of it. But you see it was built by David Burbank about 1807. And then ? it was a big boom time at that time when we first came to California. And at the time they had to put tourists and visitors to the town and later it was turned into a regular hotel and we stayed here until our house was ready. I was ? myself because I found that the high school had a wonderful basketball team and needed their own girls basketball team. And the boys won the championship for that year too. And so I seen was the happy Burbank. It was a very different situation. They were no paved streets in Burbank at that time. They were riding ? down San Fernando road and ? rides and all and ? said they didn't have a patient above 60 but it was a small town. It was a fun time. They really did enjoy it. Dad had the Burbank Review at that time. He

only lived until 1914. He passed away then my mother took the Burbank Review and then I came back to my teaching job and was teaching ? and helped her with the Burbank Review at that time. And later on, as I went to school on the red cars in to Los Angeles everyday. ? to the old Norman School. That's where the Burbank...the Los Angeles Library now sits up on the hill there, you see it there. And so in those days we had only the two years of preparation. So I started teaching in Burbank in 1914 and my boys and girls came all the way from where Warner Bros. is now from Brand's Castle to Sun Valley and most of them came barefooted. They were farmer's boys and girls.

MR. WICKER: They rode horses.

MRS. WICKER: And some of them rode horses and they tied their horses and their wagons and brought their feed for their horses and tied them on the school grounds up at the other side. You see, at that time the school...the first little Burbank school was built out in the valley near Burbank Blvd. and Mariposa. Just a little one room school. Then about '87 again they built this school...it was right there on Magnolia across from the Administration

Building here. With a big bell tower and who got to pull the bell, you know, was a prize to ring the bell.

MR. WICKER: ? front door.

MRS. WICKER: Yes, we have a picture of that. My first ? at 49, I told them I'm 49. ? taken there. I'll show you a picture of them soon. We were dressed in hand-me-downs in the times. And then the girls were barefooted as well as boys and then got to give me a lunch in the lard field like they use to. I've some interesting pictures that I'll show you over here because it was different. So I taught there for a few years and was married and had two little boys of my own and went back to teaching again. To, so to speak, keep the wolf from the door when the Depression started to come and the poultry weren't making any pay. And I only taught for 41 years. So...

DODSON: That's all, just 41 years?

MRS. WICKER: Yes, I was principal for...I was the teacher for at first and then I opened the ?Miller School in 1923 as a teaching principal. At that time our school board and this gets very interesting, was

very first settlers and they bought property in outlying districts all around the central school. Way over here and out in the valley and bought about 6? And started two small schools first. Miller School and Lincoln School out on Buena Vista. And immediately people started buying lots and building on them. And that was then and then in the next few years they built them two high school districts and ? and so you see the rhythm of the school board in those early days really helped them and the development of the city in a residential fashion.

DODSON: Usually it's the other way around. They wait till the houses are there and then the school comes.

MRS. WICKER: Right now they're selling up property up near the hills that they had purchased with the possibility of opening a school there. And now they find they don't need it so they're selling it for the big price they ? So I thought that was rather interesting that they did it in that way. After being at Miller School and seeing it grow from a few teachers school to a twenty-two teacher school, I transferred to the Central office and ? into a position. And was there 20 years. So all together I was working for the schools for 49

years and all the pictures are interesting because all this time we were going from the little eight teacher school...one school had eight teachers of which I was one, to a school system of 365 elementary school teachers. I'm speaking of elementary now. So as that grew and the town ? it really is a very interesting picture to see the growth and the types of homes that were built. And the business that were growing. And all this time this so-called industrial revolution is taking part. It was a ? factory being the first one built you know.

MR. WICKER: ? tractors.

MRS. WICKER: At the corner of Alameda and San Fernando Road. And that was built there in just about 1910/11. And then everything else started going. Gradually the farms began to go. We had Japanese...you asked a question about integration. We had Japanese and Mexican labor farm workers and very few Negro people. There was a rule in Burbank which census in I guess prove them illegal that no colored person could sleep in. If anybody had colored help, they had to go home some place else to ?...it was day laborer.

DODSON: Glendale had the same rule.

MRS. WICKER: Yes, they did. And you see Pasadena was quite different. They had their people over here many wealthy, early wealthy people had their homes in Pasadena. And they didn't have colored folk living there. There were so, as they speak of the so-called busing program now, Burbank doesn't have that problem because they just happened to start earlier. But we didn't have the problem. That's about the biggest problem historically and that was when the Japanese people went to concentration camps during the war. That was heartbreaking because those were some of our finest ? Those people were so devoted to their children and devoted to their schools and such good citizens and such good business people that they were people of more than average character and loyalty to the schools. And as far as we could see, to the government, but because of international implication, the concentration camps were opened. And I can still close my eyes and feel the tears when I saw those people loaded into trucks to go from Burbank.

DODSON: Did you feel there was no opposition on the part of the people of Burbank toward them?

MRS. WICKER: No. I felt...we cried their ? they were so devoted to their families and to the schools and anything that...

MR. WICKER: You were losing your friends.

MRS. WICKER: I was not aware...now see, we had a newspaper and so consequently we felt the pulse of a good many things more than the average person. And I can't recall any opposition of knowing what people that I knew to the Japanese people. Or any feeling of disloyalty. There was more of a kind of sadness there with us. I just mention that in passing.

DODSON: Well that's a rather interesting point that we were rather glad to have your point made.

LILLY: ? Japanese...?

MRS. WICKER: ? many many rooster farm. They were are biggest farmers here and today you know, the Japanese gardeners and you know we have Japanese gardeners that go from place to place.

(INAUDIBLE)

MRS. WICKER: And in those days we had the same task of working the Mexican people. They weren't the laboratory people that we have today.

MR. WICKER: There weren't wet backs...??

MRS. WICKER: In those early days, most of our social activities were around the church. Burbank was a pretty conservative community and we had a lot of picnics. We had a lot of ice cream socials and the people both are from the young people and the young married people would bring their children and the old folks would be there and they'd happen in that big building there on the corner of the big Burbank block. We'd all go up there and have a supper and have just a great time and had music. Lots of times people gathered in the homes to sing around the piano. So very much there. You know what I did when I use to come to see you...I remember singing. I always sat there and we had a good time. We had books...he loved to be read to. And we'd go for long hikes and we'd carry our things for a picnics clear over to Griffith Park and build a...carry our things to make a fire with. Cook eggs in the ashes and those potatoes and things of that kind. We had an awfully good time.

DODSON: Do you do any of those things with your boyfriend here? You see how entertainment has changed with the passing of time.

MRS. WICKER: We had...the alterations were just starting along about 1912-14. Do you know Barney Oldfield's name. Barney Oldfield went through Burbank with his stuff, was it? And from Los Angeles back to meadow? and of course all the young people went out there ? sometimes at night, and we get in a field, hey field at ? crossing at sat on a big hey stack ? to watch the alterations. Oh, that was lots of fun.

MR. WICKER: And then let me tell you something about Barney Oldfield. It wasn't me...it was one of the boys that were racing. See, they were having their ? Los Angeles to Sacramento but they didn't know the curves that there was over the railroad tracks. ? bends and curves that ran over the railroad tracks. They went right straight through ? out into the ?

DODSON: I can imagine that they were pretty juicy side effects.

MR. WICKER: ?

MRS. WICKER: Well, Burbank in those days was of course, I'm thinking of the differences of then and now. Of course, looked over the valley ? and the air was

clearer and you could go for a walk and even I could go for a walk out night any place. Perfectly safe. We never locked our doors. Nobody locked the doors.

MR. WICKER: For 25 years we never locked our doors.

DODSON: Is that right?

MRS. WICKER: No, that's right. We never did. And things were really very different. But after all, you know times are changed and ? And in the teaching of some people of some prominence. When had this 41...in my 2nd grade...there was Jeffrey Schools and then Jim Jeffries got here. And Jim Jeffries and his wife use to come to our school to all of our meetings and things and he was a very devoted father and ? on the job. And you know Jeffries had his big dance out here. After he quit fighting. After he won the championship. And hearing the name Jim Jeffries, one of our early prize fighters. It was a long time ago and he bought a big ranch out here in the Burbank area. And he had all kinds of crops and he had his barn. His big red barn was the one that people know about because he couldn't lose his interest in the boxers fighting and so he trained young people in

the art here in his little red barn. And then so later, not ? down at Knotttsberry Farm ?

DODSON: Well he stayed here not too long ago then.

MRS. WICKER: Not too long.

DODSON: Because I seem to remember that I've seen that.

MR. WICKER: About ten years ago. ?

DODSON: Well one thing I wanted to ask you...now you mentioned as a form of amusement the ice cream social. Now we never hear that expression any more. Can you tell us what an ice cream social was like.

MRS. WICKER: Oh an ice cream social. Of course, the ice cream was delicious, like homemade ice cream is. But the most fun was there was no electricity of course to run the machine you know like you did today. So the boys would run it and the girls would sit on the freezers you know so that to hold it down and the boys would...

LILLY: How did they do it?

MRS. WICKER: You'd do it by hand. You see, turn the crank by hand. So it was lots of fun making the ice cream you see. And then of course, it was fun to eat it. And then you all had to fight over the dasher of course. ? It's fun because the dasher when you pulled the dasher out you know it moves the thing ? and then you put that on the big counter and you'd pack the rest of the ice cream of course and eat it later. So we had lots of fun at the ice cream social and sometimes we'd make money at them with our church things you know. And we ate pig.

LILLY: Did you go to the beach?

MRS. WICKER: Oh my yes. We would go to the beach and that was you see, you just right over and through...usually we go around that way or over the pass through to Hollywood and go down to Santa Monica and we had the poultry ranch. The only way we could do it was cheat on the chickens and feed them early and pack the little Ford with all those goodies. And take four other families and their children. Take our supper to cook on the sand and go down. Then we would camp all night and we would take a big umbrella to put over on a folding cot to put on the sand and put the big umbrella over the top and then the whole group of us would camp on the sand.

And we'd build a big fire and go for a swim first and then come out and cook our supper and then we'd sit around the campfire and talk and sing and go to bed. Get up the next morning, take another swim, cook breakfast and then hurry back to Burbank by about 10:00. And the chickens would be running up and down the fences with them rubbing their beaks off on the fence and that was about the only time kind of vacations we had. Because we couldn't do... Oh yes, there was one place up at Castle Rock, where the blue waves came...just one big breaker would break on the shore and if you could swim, you had either go through that or under it go out immediately and go up and over it, ride over the wave. Then it was calm to swim out beyond there. But if it caught you, it just rolled you out there from the bottom. And you held your grip and you held your grip and came up...but it always brings you up on shore. It's lots and lots of fun.

DODSON: Lilly has been quite a swimmer. So she would like what you're saying.

MRS. WICKER: Oh, then you would like that. That's where we do lots of swimming. In fact, that's when I use to come down to the old Burbank Clubhouse. It's now

the Norman Church, they bought it. And it had a pool. We use to come out there and take our two boys and swim all and they let us climb the fence and go in over the top. Cold water of course and so we'd do it three or four times a week. ? about 75 ? so you could go easily and dress quickly you know but the Y it's kind of hard.

MR. WICKER: The raft wasn't quite big enough.

MRS. WICKER: As we told you, when we married in 1917 and then went to live in this little house up on the hill. It was a cute little house. It was ? house with no plaster. So it was fun. It had a back room and it had inside toilets. But we didn't have anything to heat the water in. So Mr. Walter Gibson heated the water in an old gallon ? gallon wash board that people could bring their washing there. They didn't know...it was a long narrow big thing. And we would carry that through the bedroom and put it in the tub. So you had a bath about this deep. But it was...we lots of...we had a coal stove, no gas ? We had electricity but no gas and so we had a wood stove but we didn't use that very often.

MR. WICKER: And down at the bottom of the hill. We were up on quite ? down at the bottom of the hill was city water was down at the bottom of the hill. That's as far as they came. I have a little Burbank/Los Angeles but I had 500 gallon tank right on the side of house. I had to bring the water up there. ? in the house.

MRS. WICKER: Now speaking of difference in times. We have two boys in three years. I had both by babies and a later daughter at home. With Mr. Wickersham's assistance. Couldn't get a nurse in time. So I was feeling today how those young people have to pay so much for...to pay \$50 for a prenatal birth and postnatal care and got along just fine. The doctor showed them how to prepare of my special pads and bed pans and everything sterilized and we just simply got along just fine. And they're talking more about home births today.

LILLY: Yeah.

DODSON: That's what I was going to ask you. Were your babies born at home or in a hospital?

MRS. WICKER: Yes. They were born at home. They were my babies... ?

MR. WICKER: And nowadays they ?

MRS. WICKER: And Mr. Wickersham was right there with every one of them. Assisting the doctor and it was just...it had gone along just wonderfully. And the nurse...now here's another interesting point, the practically nurse who came and helped take care of me...in those days you ? that was the custom ? and she would take care of me and the baby...cook the meals...if she needs to water the garden, she'd water, sometimes the pump would stops and she went down to the ? hill and started the pump going. And was very happy to do it you know. Mended Russell's shirts a little ironing. Did anything that anybody needed ?

MR. WICKER: She did everything but milk the cow.

DODSON: She drew the line at that?

MRS. WICKER: Well no.

MR. WICKER: I had a Holstein cow that gave 10 gallons of milk a day.

MRS. WICKER: But it is interesting as you see the difference how the cycle comes around back to home delivery if possible and a father ? plans the birth.

LILLY: Well right now they're talking about that. ?

MRS. WICKER: And it's very good. ? Then one of our interesting associations of both before and after we were married was Mr. J. Styles, who owned all these properties over here. Who owned about six...he lots and lots of melon ranches. And my cousin's sister-in-law was the daughter of his manager, who managed all of his little ranches. And Mr. Style was slight of character. He was a little man and of course he was a millionaire. He had a great big home in San Diego and he had this big old house over here on 6th Street. It is still there. I've slept in that old house. It was a great big old six-story house. And, of course, his foreman Ben?, my friend's father was ? I went to school with her, I went out with her many times before we were married. And so Mr. Style came back to Burbank one time and was staying at the home and he heard that I was a teacher. I was teaching there at the time and he said, "There is a Teacher's Institute in San Diego. Are you coming?" And I said, "Yes," and he said, "Come

and stay at our house." And he had two of my friends who were musicians who had played for him and had played the violin for him that night and he was ? too. And we felt we should report but his hostess, Mrs. Churchill said, "You must accept. Mr. Style would be hurt." So we went to San Diego in this great big old ? had their big white limousine and their chauffeur at our disposal. Went to all the Teacher's Institute things and all and it was a very interesting time. Mr. Style was really quite...well he was what you called a character. So we had a number of those intimate little contacts that way that were a lot of fun.

DODSON: Now you don't have a park named for him at the present time.

MRS. WICKER: Yes, Style Park is really...the Starlight Bowl is the part of the Style Park. And way on over is Wildwood Canyon and Wildwood Park and he had a little cottage over there that Mr. Taylor, his foreman, who was father of my friend. Over there and we camped in that. We spent time over in that. It's a group little place over there and Burbank opened it to campers there at one time but had to close it later.

MR. WICKER: ??

MRS. WICKER: There's one little interesting fact I think that I might mention incidentally. Russell was speaking about his mail route. All the way up there, about where ?Green is now, it's now been turned over the college. Chiropractic College. It's up there where all those big olive trees are on Glenoaks and there was a little barn back in there...it's gone now but it had just that's one of the Pony Express car stops...the big Pony Express that came all the way through Arizona and up the state here.

DODSON: Well, that is very interesting. No one has told us about that.

MR. WICKER: I didn't get a picture of it. Darn it. I could have taken a picture of that but I didn't...

DODSON: And it's still there. I haven't seen it.

MRS. WICKER: Oh yes, it's still there. Painted red.

MR. WICKER: It's been painted a dozen times.

MRS. WICKER: And it had a big platform out in front of the Pony Express would dash up and would have the next

horse waiting for him and he'd grab his bags on he'd go. He came from all the way from St. Louis. So there were lots of those old historical things.

DODSON: It's tragic that no one could see at the time that was torn down. Now future is ? by it.

MR. WICKER: ? ? One day it was gone.

MRS. WICKER: One of the major events...as it was...was we had a big fire here. You know the full side of the hill. We were just building our new house on Cypress and still living in a little farmhouse up on the hill where he had the poultry and the fire came over with a big wind. It came from La Cresenta side and it ignited the bottom almost as quickly as the top because of the wind going ? Brand. And it just burst into flames. That whole thing. And we were building a new house but the windows and the doors were not in yet. And I was pregnant with my daughter and Mr. Wickersham put the little Ford and took the two boys, the dog and drove down from ? down on 10th Street. I got a hose and he was ? pajamas on up on the roof fighting the...the roof was on fire. He had to put that out before he left.

MR. WICKER: ? ? and this hose here. ?

MRS. WICKER: We were just half a block away from that blazing
 fire.

DODSON: What year was that?

MRS. WICKER: I was trying to think and I was listening. It was
 the winter of '27...it was December of '27 and the
 only way I could keep going was to take the hose
 and wet myself all over...

TAPE 2 - SIDE 1

MRS. WICKER: You couldn't continue without just wetting yourself completely. And then I would run to the next pile of Earl ? lumber that he ? Or our house was a spot and all the houses down the road. So...

MR. WICKER: You had to climb up on the roof. It was wet.

MRS. WICKER: And the next morning, this whole field all along here was full of black from top to bottom. All the way as far as you could see. Just buried the whole street. It was really a very tragic time. First you went through the terrible earthquakes you know. Then we went through the big flood. I can't remember the time of the big flood but the ? had to come across a high trestle down there between here and Los Angeles, very high. It was above...

MR. WICKER: Eatondale. Remember the ?

DODSON: Yes. That I can remember. ?

MRS. WICKER: It is true. You asked me one time ?

MR. WICKER: ? down in there and washed the trestle up and she couldn't get home and she was down in Los Angeles.

MRS. WICKER: But the question was asked as to what ? was important. I think that the ? of water and the bringing of water to the valley. ?

DODSON: Now you were living here when the aqueduct was open the first time probably?

MRS. WICKER: Oh yeah. But you see when we were living in our house in Texas there were no check stands up in those hills and we had rains as it happened ? At first it's gentle for a long while then we'd get a cloud burst and then everything goes with it. And the Big Tjunga. There were no flood controls. The Los Angeles River was just a great rain forest with a river bed and so when Big Tjunga closed that year we just walked clear around here it just washed clear along and it took houses down it. We had a friend that was caught in that. And of course I think Burbank had those floods. Olive Avenue and all the way down streets would be full of gators and ? as big as this table and tree trunks. And I'd drive home from Lewis School up on Providencia with that little old Ford and just stomp it into low and go in and over the rocks and

down stream. Every time the storm came in, the streets would fill with debris. And they go up to the check stands as far in the canyon and they got to the Big Tijunga the big flood control and the big ? down there and that took care of it.

MR. WICKER: There was one house over there on Angelina that was entirely ? telephone pole and it went clear through the house.

MRS. WICKER: It just went straight through it.

MR. WICKER: Nine feet of it sticking out here and six feet over there.

DODSON: Well that would have been, has anyone taken the picture of that.

MR. WICKER: Well, I didn't do it.

MRS. WICKER: It's too bad we didn't think about those things on that day. You know I heard that we heard we went through the old ? and the build prize winning sweepstakes when the floats were here then. They were ? to the school. That was very interesting. All the way from having the drawing on paper, building the model, modeling large size posters of

paper and planning all of the decorations of flowers and going over there and working on it. It was early that year ? and Mr. Wickersham and I don't know if you heard, were the three that worked together and we were lead committee. It was very interesting work. For instance, if you're putting a design on a float and they're going to have to have blue with corn flowers and a row of marigold and something else like that...they figure so much a square inch and into this thing that stands for feet and then how many bunches of flowers and how many flowers in a bunch. How many flowers it took to cover a square inch. How many bunches of flowers were in there and it only goes along that ? It's quite an education to put the flowers.

DODSON: Well no one has described that for us before. So we're glad you looked behind the scenes.

MRS. WICKER: Then you go over and Mr. Wickersham had charge of the mechanical of things. And they'd drive it over during the night when the traffic was not too bad. And then you had your different shifts working to take petals off a stock or off a carnations and put a little bed of glue on them and then wrap them over. ?

DODSON: Each petal is put on separately?

MR. WICKER: Each petal is put on separately and went around the horse's mouth or anything like that. And those are left over.

DODSON: I wouldn't have the patience to do that sort of thing.

MRS. WICKER: It takes...your assigned to the one horse and your assigned to another horse and everything and then somebody else...Mr. Wickersham had the load the horses when we were decorating over away from the float. And had a ring in the back of him, pull it up and have a pulley to carry it over and set it down in the right place on the float.

MR. WICKER: ? some decorating seeds on a certain plant and you had an overhead drop bar that would pick these things up and reach and would carry it over here.

MRS. WICKER: And then you pray that the ring won't break.

(INAUDIBLE AND OVERLAPPING)

DODSON: Yes. I think I have some pictures of some of those.

(INAUDIBLE AND OVERLAPPING)

DODSON: The most that I know about the peak parade thing is what I see on television where it looks to me like everybody's freezing to death.

MRS. WICKER: It is cold. You get shivering sometimes you know.

DODSON: I don't see how you could stand it working all night that way.

MRS. WICKER: Well, it's a hard job. Then when you got to do it ? along in line march. I'll tell you the biggest problem...it's...you get to...you have to be in the line to march by 7:00 over on Orange Grove. And you go to get that big float out the door and you found that you don't clear all those clearances. And it's that beautiful turret that's all decorated with flowers. Prettiest thing. They've miscalculated. So then you have to take that whole thing off very carefully.

MR. WICKER: ? it was just about this high. So they would drive around these houses. ? and then put it back on again. ? working ? it's 7:00.

MRS. WICKER: It was really an experience that you would never want to be without.

DODSON: Did they make those people come out and stand on the float for a couple of hours then?

MRS. WICKER: They met us. The parents would come with their ? That was the hard part. And I know one time we had a Miss America and ? with her beautiful costume on and everything and just chewing gum to keep the ? up? And I said, "Mary Lou, give me the gum." "Oh Mrs. Wickersham, let me have it, I won't chew it I just put in ?" "No, I have to have the gum." And so you have all these ? but you leave them on as long as you can and then you have to get it off you know. ?

DODSON: How in the world do they know that?

MRS. WICKER: Well, you just become a group ?

(OVERLAPPING - INAUDIBLE)

MRS. WICKER: ? the first time. So you just go back to nature. And it's...nobody knows all the little details of the ?

DODSON: Well, I wondered about some of those floats.

MRS. WICKER: Well, I tell you, it's really quite interesting.

DODSON: Of course I've always been afraid that every girl would have me ? after the parade was over.

MRS. WICKER: Well, they put all kinds of things they can underneath ? and back. So I think there almost complete ? little odd bits here and there ?

DODSON: What sort of a student was she?

MRS. WICKER: She was a good student and a very beautiful shy sort of girl, just as pretty as a picture and just as sweet as she could be. Of course, her father hands ? and they were a very interesting family. ?

DODSON: Did you come in contact with Betty Reynolds?

MRS. WICKER: No, her personally, just that she here in the ? ? No, I didn't have any personal contact with her. ? you'd have to do what ? But that was about the only sad thing that we had ? have to endure ? She was a wonderful soul and we have enough family

left ? with six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. And so I think that...

DODSON: Did both of your sons serve in World War II?

MRS. WICKER: No, yes, but our older son was in with his brother in Pasadena ? And the other boy was a fighter pilot in the ? Yet, I think that that, unless there is some other questions or I think that about takes care of it.

MR. WICKER: ??

DODSON: We haven't worked that part out yet. We're still working on that.

MRS. WICKER: You know, we were really are very interesting and you get to feel, where you feel to back stabbing in one school was ? teachers ? You could write a book about the things that are taking place in all of our schools.

DODSON: Well, thank you very very much Mr. and Mrs. Wickersham. This has been a most interesting and profitable interview.

You have been listening to an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Russell Wickersham of 1207 East Tijuna Avenue, Burbank. This interview was conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson, Curator of the Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum and by Miss Lilly Armida Feretti, Deputy to Dr. Dodson. The date is January 27, 1978.

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